

485. Hindoo ritual of the toilet, etc. According to ancient Hindoo custom, younger brothers should in all matters yield to elder brothers.¹ Brahmins use only the left hand for all acts of the bodily toilet. They have a very elaborate ritual for all such acts, and consider their houses defiled by the presence of Europeans who do not observe any such ritual. They remove shoes on entering a house on account of the impurity of leather.² It is not good manners amongst them to address the women of the house, or to ask for them. If a woman takes a man's arm hi public she is supposed to be his mistress. Gallantry is never displayed. A wife would resent it as disrespectful, fit only for a woman of another grade. Only courtesans, dancers, and harlots are taught to read, sing, or dance. An honest woman would be ashamed to know how to read. Brahmins regard the use of the pocket handkerchief with the same disgust which a European feels for the Hindoo use of the fingers which European laborers practice. Hindoos clean the teeth with a fresh twig every day, and are horrified that Europeans do it with a brush made of the hair of an animal, and do it frequently with the same brush. There are days on which one must not brush the teeth on pain of hell. "Saliva is of all things the most utterly polluting."³ For a woman to have to part with her hair is one of the greatest of degradations and the most terrible of all trials. Hindoo women never use false hair if they lose their own.⁴ Women are safe and are treated with respect in public. The honor of a Hindoo requires that he look no higher than the ankles of a passing woman.⁵ He must not touch a woman. If many men and women meet, for instance in traveling, they may

lie down side
 by side to sleep without impropriety.⁶ Not one man
 in a hundred
 in India ever tasted liquor, " but a Hindoo beggar
 may not eat
 bread made with yeast or baked by any but
 Hindoos of his own
 or a better caste/' ⁷ The Angharmi of northeastern
 India consider

¹ Holtzmann, *Ind. Sagen*, II, 267.

² Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, 396.

³ *Ibid.*, 376.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 375.

⁵ Nivedita, *Web of Indian Life*, 14.

⁶ Dubois, *Mceurs de Finds* (1825), II, 280, 329, 332, 334, 441, 476, 480.

⁷ Nivedita, *Web of Indian Life*, u.